

Pact Debate Shifts to Armed Services Panel

Skeptical Senators Seek to Pick Holes in Case Presented by Brown

Debating the Treaty

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WASHINGTON, July 23 — Senators critical of the strategic arms treaty with the Soviet Union today attempted to pick holes in the Government's case for the accord as discussion shifted to the Armed Services Committee.

However, there was also articulate defense of the treaty, and one conservative, Senator Barry M. Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, said secret testimony on verification had satisfied some of his doubts "to the point where I would not be too exercised over it now."

Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, in many hours of testimony, made the same points he had made previously before the Foreign Relations Committee, asserting that the treaty would tend to limit the Soviet military arsenal.

The Armed Services Committee does not have formal jurisdiction, but some of its members, by virtue of their position, know more about strategic weapons and strategic doctrine than some of the members of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Foreign Relations Panel Today

The Armed Services Committee hearings will continue for the rest of this week and pick up again in September, after the summer recess. The Foreign Relations Committee will resume its hearings tomorrow.

Today's session in the Armed Services Committee did not produce as much in the way of argumentative fireworks as some had expected.

Senator Henry M. Jackson, Democrat of Washington, who is an avowed opponent of the treaty, said it did not establish equal levels of effective nuclear force, as required by a law enacted in 1972. He said Secretary Brown was using scare tactics and was exaggerating probable Soviet military developments if the treaty were rejected.

Senator John Tower of Texas, the ranking Republican on the committee, also followed a line of questioning that showed he considered a predicted vulnerability of United States land-based missiles in the early 1980's to be a greater threat to the strategic balance than did Secretary Brown.

Alluding to the existence of submarine-launched missiles and bombers in addition to the ICBM's, Mr. Brown said at one point, "ICBM vulnerability is not the same thing as the vulnerability of the United States."

On the other hand, Senator John C. Culver, Democrat of Iowa, and Senator Gary Hart, Democrat of Colorado, used their allotted question time to establish that the treaty placed worthwhile restraints on the Soviet Union while not significantly precluding the modernization of United States systems.

Senator Goldwater, did not say that his

"The treaty appears to be grossly unequal and it may presage the emergence of Soviet nuclear superiority in the early 1980's." — Senator John Tower, Republican of Texas.

"There is a strong presumption in favor of this treaty. The critics of SALT are embarrassed by their own premises. The more pessimistic they are about the Soviet threat, the more valuable SALT restrictions on that

threat are." — Senator Gary Hart, Democrat of Colorado.

"The burden of proof on SALT II rests with the proponents. While I won't rule out the notion that a good case is made for SALT II, I just want to put the committee on notice that this will take, as we say back home, a heap of doing." — Senator Barry Goldwater, Republican of Arizona.

worries about verifiability had been completely dissipated, but he made clear that they had been significantly diminished.

He urged Secretary Brown to consider the advisability of an amendment that would count the Soviet TU-22M bomber, called Backfire in the West, as a strategic weapon, even if it were necessary to count more than 100 United States FB-111 bombers as strategic weapons also. Senator Goldwater seemed to imply that such an amendment would make the treaty easier to guide to final Senate approval.

Mr. Brown said he could see no way to write such an amendment that would be militarily profitable to the United States, adding that opening up the Backfire issue might open other issues the United States had settled to its advantage.

In another potentially significant step, the committee chairman, Senator John C. Stennis, Democrat of Mississippi, said the array of nuclear weapons possessed by the United States and the Soviet Union was so vast that the two parties are "actually driven" to this treaty "or a similar step, lest each destroy the other."

While this was by no means a pledge of support for the treaty, it tended to underline an appraisal by a pro-treaty source that Senator Stennis was "horrified by the prospect of nuclear war" and might be a possible "yes vote."

Senator Sam Nunn, Democrat of Georgia, a key figure in the Senate debate, gave few hints today of how he viewed the treaty. But he indicated that he might vote for the pact if the Government committed itself to greater military spending.

Brown Notes Erosion by Inflation

In response to Mr. Nunn's questions, Mr. Brown said planned increases in spending had been eroded by inflation to less than 2 percent a year. Mr. Nunn said he hoped that, at some point, the Defense Secretary would "go public and start to

jump up and down." Mr. Brown said that to jump up and down was not his style.

But he added that, if Soviet spending continued to increase without appropriate American budget increases, there was a risk that the Russians might become militarily superior.

Overall, Secretary Brown was not as roughly handled as some people had expected. However, a number of committee members, asked probing questions indicating that they found a good many shortcomings in both the treaty and in the Government's arguments for it.

Such questions were asked by Senators William S. Cohen of Maine, Gordon J. Humphrey of New Hampshire and Roger W. Jepsen of Iowa, all Republicans. Among the Democrats who raised questions about the value of the treaty was Howard W. Cannon of Nevada.